

**Common Core of Data Dropout Statistic:
Reporting Instructions for the 1997-98 School Year
January 1999**

These are the instructions for reporting dropouts for the National Center for Education Statistics on the Common Core of Data (CCD) survey. These instructions ensure that the reported dropout data are comparable across all states school districts. The dropout count is reported at the school district level on the CCD Public Education Agency Survey.

I. Dropout Definition

The CCD dropout definition is based on a “snapshot” count of students at the beginning of the school year: A dropout is an individual who:

1. was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year¹ and was not enrolled on October 1 of the current school year; or
2. was not enrolled on October 1 of the previous school year although expected to be in membership (i.e., was not reported as a dropout the year before); and
3. has not graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved educational program and
4. does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:
 - i. transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved education program;
 - ii. temporary school-recognized absence due to suspension or illness, or
 - iii. death.

For purposes of applying this dropout definition, the following definitions also apply:

- A. *School year* is the 12-month period beginning on October 1, 1997 and ending September 30, 1998. Thus, it includes the summer following the regular school year.
- B. *School completer* is an individual who has graduated from high school or completed some other education program that is approved by the state or local education agency.
- C. *State- or district-approved program* is one that leads to the receipt of formal recognition of completion from school authorities. It may include special education programs, home-based instruction, and programs administered by a secondary education agency (but not adult or postsecondary) leading to a GED-based diploma or some other certification differing from the regular diploma. Programs recognized as legitimate by the state are considered approved even if the public education system does not directly administer them; home schooling and charter schools may be examples of such programs.
- D. *Transfer to another school or program* may be confirmed by a method selected by the state or school district. A transcript request, withdrawal notice signed by a parent that includes assurances the student will be enrolled elsewhere, and the like are acceptable. States are discouraged from accepting hearsay reports or unsubstantiated statements of intent from departing students.
- E. *Race/ethnicity* of dropouts is reported using the current standards set by the Office of Management and Budget. The categories approved for the CCD through the 2000-2001 school year are American Indian/Alaskan native; Asian/Pacific Islander; Black, not Hispanic; Hispanic; White, not Hispanic. Definitions are included in the CCD Instructions Manual. These categories are expected to change for the 2001-2002 reporting year.
- F. *Sex* of dropouts is to be reported as male or female.
- G. *Grade classifications*, grades 7 through 12, are used to report dropouts, not the student's age.
- H. *Ungraded dropouts* should be allocated to the grade most appropriate for their age.

¹ A student who was enrolled in September, 1997; dropped out of school in February, 1998; and was not enrolled in school on October 1, 1998 would be reported as a 1997-1998 dropout (*previous year*) on the 1998-1999 CCD (*current year*).

II. Other Basic Guidelines

The CCD reports an *event* dropout count – the number of students who leave school during a defined period of time, in this case, a calendar year. The count is taken on October 1, 1997 or the school day closest to this date, in order to agree with the CCD membership count that is taken on the same day.

The defining decision is whether a student is a dropout on October 1, 1997. A student who missed much of the previous school year (1996-97) but who is in membership on October 1, 1997 is not a dropout, while a student who is not in membership on October 1, 1997 but who returns later in that school year is a dropout (for the previous year, 1996-97). CCD publications compute a dropout rate by dividing the number of dropouts for a year by the membership count taken at the beginning of that year.

More guidelines:

1. “*Summer dropouts*” are students who were not dropouts at the close of the previous school year (1996-97) but who fail to enroll by October 1, 1997. Summer dropouts are reported as dropouts for the grade and school year for which they fail to report. For example, a student who completes the 10th grade in 1996-1997 but who is not re-enrolled on October 1, 1997 is reported as a 1997-98 dropout for 11th grade.
2. Students who enroll in adult education programs are counted as dropouts *unless the elementary/secondary school system remains responsible for the student*. The intent of this guideline is to ensure that students who do not complete a program but for whom the district no longer takes responsibility are counted as dropouts.
 - i. This means that a student who enrolls in a school-operated program for high-risk students *is not a dropout*, even if that program is preparing the student to take the GED examination. Transfer to an alternative education setting, if it is part of the elementary/secondary education system, is not considered dropping out. Students enrolled in elementary/secondary education in prisons, hospitals, ‘store front’ locations or other nontraditional locations are not dropouts if the program is part of the elementary/secondary system.
 - ii. A student who leaves an elementary/secondary school and enrolls in adult education *is a dropout*. The exception to this guideline is the case in which the public school system monitors the student’s enrollment and reports the student as a dropout if the student drops out of the adult program. An example of this would be a cooperative arrangement between a public school district and a local technical institute that provides GED preparation for students referred directly by the district, if the district counted as dropouts those referred students who did not complete the GED study program. Students who drop out during the 1996-97 school year but who have obtained a completion credential, such as a GED-based diploma or certificate of completion, on October 1, 1997 are not reported as dropouts.
3. An early college admissions student, one who transfers to a postsecondary program leading to a baccalaureate or associate’s degree, is not a dropout.
4. Students who fail to meet some graduation requirements, and who leave school without a diploma or other credential, are dropouts even if they have completed the 12th grade.
5. Students who leave the United States are not considered to be dropouts even if the school district cannot document the student’s subsequent enrollment in school. Students who move from a state or DC to the outlying areas are also excluded from the dropout counts.
6. Students who drop out during the 1996-97 school year but are re-enrolled on October 1, 1997 are not reported as dropouts.
7. Students who drop out multiple times in a school year are reported only once for a single school year. However, students who drop out in more than one year are reported as dropouts for each year in which they are not in membership on October 1.
8. Underage dropouts, those who leave school when they are still too young to do so legally, should be reported on the CCD if they drop out of any of grades 7 through 12. These dropouts should be reported even if the state or district considers them “truants” rather than dropouts.

Summary of School Leaver Status	
A Student Who:	Dropout?
1. Graduated or received some other recognized credential, such as a certificate of attendance or GED	No
2. Only attended summer school in this school district (was not enrolled during the regular school year)	No
3. Left school without a diploma or other certification after passing age up to which the district was required to provide a free, public education	Yes
4. Died	No
5. Gone; status is unknown	Yes
6. Moved to another district in this or some other state, not known to be in school	Yes
7. Moved out of the United States, enrolment status not known	No
8. Transferred, enrolled in:	
Another public school, a private school, or charter school	No
Home schooling	No
Early college (baccalaureate or associate's program)	No
Adult education program	Yes
9. Is in an institution that is not primarily academic (military, possibly Job Corps, corrections, etc.)	
Offers a secondary education program	No
Does not offer a secondary education program	Yes
10. Is not in school, but known to be:	
Planning to enroll late (e.g., extended family vacation, seasonal work)	No
Ill, verified as legitimate	No
Ill, not verified as legitimate	Yes
Suffering long-term illness and not receiving education services (residential drug treatment, severe physical or mental illness)	No
Suspended or expelled, term of suspension or expulsion not yet over	No
Suspended or expelled, term of suspension or expulsion over	Yes
Expelled, no option to return	Yes
Expelled, enrolled in another school and/or district	No
11. In a nontraditional education setting, such as hospital/homebound instruction, residential special education, correctional institution, community or technical college:	
Program administered by agency considered a special school district or extension of regular school district	No
Program is off-campus offering of regular school district	No
Program not approved or administered by regular district; classified as adult education	Yes

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